



# 25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Resources and Development Committee offers support for Navajo allottees affected by the Chaco Canyon land withdrawal**

**NAGEEZI, N.M.** — During a work session hosted by the 25th Navajo Nation Council’s Resources and Development Committee (RDC) on July 7, Council members offered their strong support for Navajo land allotment owners who are impacted by the recent action by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to withdraw lands for a 20-year period around the Chaco National Historical Park from future leasing and mining claims, which has devastating impacts for many allotment owners and their families.

RDC Chair Brenda Jesus and Vice Chair Casey Johnson reaffirmed their opposition to the land withdrawal and reassured allotment owners that they would continue to advocate for no buffer zone around the national park. RDC member Council Delegate Danny Simpson requested the work session to be held in the community of Nageezi, to allow a forum for the allottees and others to voice their concerns.

The work session also included comments from several individuals who support the land withdrawal and 10-mile buffer zone. However, the large majority of public comments opposed the action of Secretary Haaland and Department of the Interior.

“We stand with the Navajo allottees who rely on their mineral rights to provide for their families and livelihood. The Navajo Nation and the allottees did not receive sufficient consultation and Secretary Haaland never met directly with the people who are most impacted by the land withdrawal. We continue to be open to discussing the matter with Secretary Haaland as we work with congressional members and other stakeholders,” said Delegate Simpson.

On April 27, the Navajo Nation Council’s Naabik’iyatí Committee approved Resolution NA-BIAP-11-23, opposing the withdrawal of approximately 351,000 acres of public land surrounding Chaco Canyon. At the same time, the Committee rescinded the Navajo Nation’s previous position supporting a five-mile buffer zone. RDC members continue to work with Arizona Congressman Eli Crane (R-AZ) to support H.R. 4374, the “Energy Opportunities for All Act” that would nullify the Chaco Canyon Land Withdrawal.

“We support you and your families. We continue to voice our concerns at the federal level to convey our message that adequate consultation was not conducted with the Navajo Nation. Navajo allottees have our support as we move forward,” stated RDC Chair Jesus.

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